

## PROJECT PROPOSAL

### Maasai Girls Empowerment



Arusha,  
TANZANIA

# Overview

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit is dedicated to the evangelization and service of the poor. It is the merging of the Spiritans (a Roman Catholic Congregation of Priests, Brothers and Lay Associates, founded in 1703 by a young French nobleman, Claude Poullart des Places), and the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (founded by Francis Libermann, a converted Jew). Their motto, "One Heart One Soul," is taken from **Acts 4:32**, in honor of these two early Christian communities.

The members of this diverse ministry are pioneers by instinct, who introduced Christianity to the East African region for the first time in the 1860s. Since then, they have been making an invaluable contribution to society in the fields of education, health, parish ministry, refugee ministry, Interreligious Dialog, aviation, psychology, philosophy, theology, spirituality, and construction.

The Spiritans' Charism is two-dimensional, to be available before God, "Here am I, Lord...", and before their fellowmen, "Here am I, Lord, send me." (Isaiah 6:8).

In Arusha, Tanzania, Spiritan missionaries from the United States have ministered to the indigenous Maasai people in the surrounding communities for almost 60 years. One of the goals of the local Spiritans, the Catholic Diocese, is to break the cycle of childhood marriage in Maasai communities, by empowering Maasai young women for self-reliance. Early child marriage is a widespread practice in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and particularly high in the Maasai community. Reportedly, over 60% of girls in the Maasai community are married off before the age of 18. These girls are often forced to drop out of school, limiting their access to education and economic opportunities. In addition, early child marriage increases the risk of maternal mortality, as young girls are not physically mature enough to bear children safely. This deeply entrenched cultural practice in the Maasai communities, forces a lot of young women to flee their communities in fear, only to face other life-threatening risks as a result.



*Young Maasai girls sit for an exam to join the Sisters of Mary Girls' Town.  
Only an average of five has a chance of being selected.*

**"God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day." Psalm 46:5**

# Where They Are



Coordinates: 3°28'05" S, 36°19'57" E

# Project Snapshot

**Global Humanitarian Mission** is eager to support the work of the Spiritan missionaries in Tanzania, and in particular the Sisters of Mary, in their efforts to empower young Maasai women.

The **Maasai Sewing Center** project is being established to provide young girls who are not admitted to the Sisters of Mary Vocational Training Center in Kiluvya, with alternative training opportunities that will promote income-generation and enable them to become self-reliant. It will also provide advanced training for graduates of the Sisters of Mary VTC.

**2 embroidery machines** will be purchased under this project to complement the existing 20 sewing machines, 1 large garment printing machine, 1 buttons machine, and other training Equipment used at the training center.

**20 - 25 girls** will undergo skill training for six months, by graduates of the Kiluvya VTC, and upon completion, in addition to their newfound knowledge in sewing and marketing, they will also earn a new sewing machine.

The Sewing Center is expected to begin in August/September. In the interim, two girls will be in Nairobi, Kenya, being trained to operate the embroidery machine. A professional operator will then be hired to accompany their return to Tanzania, where they will supervise the classes for a 3-month period. This will give the two trainees time to develop confidence and experience to teach these classes.

Some of the sewing projects the girls will undertake will include church vestments and garments.

**TOTAL COST: \$34,320.00**



*Sample of embroidery machine needed*

# From Global Humanitarian Mission

*The Sisters of Mary have a goal -*

*To break the cycle of childhood marriages and subsequent extreme poverty among  
Maasai girls in rural Tanzania.*

*Stand with them!*

*To protect these young women and give them a future.*

*Save them from the risk of diseases and maternal mortality.*

*Empower them through training, building their self-confidence.*

*Help them stand tall and proud, rising above the adversity of their ancestors,*

*To chart their own course.*

*A beaming torch for generations to come!*



*A group of young Maasai girls prepare  
to be interviewed for Sisters of Mary School*



*Two Sisters of Mary visit a family  
to screen possible candidates*

***"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future."***

***Jeremiah 29:11***

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